

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
March 27, 2023

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-0-WBTNPLms&t=2011s>

A meeting of the Town of Fairfield was held on Monday, March 27, 2023 at 8 PM at 501 Kings Hwy East, Fairfield, CT and via Webex.

The meeting was called to order at 8 PM by Moderator Mark McDermott.

PRESENT: 37 ABSENT: 3 VACANCY: 0

PRESENT: Furey, Ruggiero, Longo, Gerber, McCormack, Perham, Durrell, Galdenzi, Lambert, Pistilli, Karson, Spolyar, Zezima, Barahona, Garskof, Siebert, Wolk, Berez, Gale, Graceffa, Havey, Kuhn, McDermott, Vergara, Wackerman, Choniski, Ference, Iacono, Meyers, Brown, Georgiadis, Horton, Scinto, Astarita, Britton, Sparacino, S. Tallman

ABSENT: Bateson, Steele, McCabe

ITEM NO. 1 ON CALL: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

Moderator McDermott led the Body in the Pledge of Allegiance and moment of silence in memory of former Asst. Fire Chief Chris Tracy who recently passed away.

CONSENT CALENDAR: The Moderator reported that item numbers 4 & 5 were eligible for the Consent Calendar. Laura Karson moved to amend the ending date to 12/21/2027 in item 5 to correct a scrivener's error, duly seconded and passed unanimously.

VOTE: Items 4 & 5 were approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 2 ON CALL: TO APPOINT REP. EDWARD BATESON TO SERVE ON THE SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE, FILLING THE VACANCY CREATED BY THE RESIGNATION OF JEFF STEELE FROM THE COMMITTEE.

Pamela Iacono, District 8 moved this item as distributed, duly seconded.

VOTE: The appointment of Ed Bateson to the SLMC was approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 3 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 27, 2023.

Cindy Perham, District 2 moved this item as distributed, duly seconded.

Ms. Iacono said a precedent may have been set by deleting an addendum provided to the Town Clerk for the record. Bill Gerber offered to withdraw the addendum he referred to in his remarks at the special meeting. Liz Zezima noted that the vote was reflective of what information they had at the time. The Moderator reminded the Body the February minutes are before them, not the January minutes.

The minutes of the February 27, 2023 meeting were approved with one abstention (Meyers).

ITEM NO. 4 ON CALL: TO CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION RECOMMENDED BY THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN: "RESOLVED, THAT A CERTAIN CONTRACT NEGOTIATED BY AND BETWEEN THE TOWN OF

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FAIRFIELD AND THE UNITED PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION (UPSEU) UNIT #454 CONCERNING CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR THE PERIOD COMMENCING JULY 1, 2020 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2024 BE, AND HEREBY IS, RATIFIED.”

This item was on the Consent Calendar.

ITEM NO. 5 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN: “RESOLVED, THAT THE PURCHASING AUTHORITY BE, AND HEREBY IS, AUTHORIZED TO EXTEND THE CURRENT AGREEMENT WITH WE CARE DENALI, LLC, TO OPERATE THE TOWN’S LEAF AND YARD WASTE FACILITY, AS DETAILED IN BID #2017-78, FOR FIVE (5) YEARS, EFFECTIVE 01/01/2023 TO 12/31/2028. WE CARE DENALI, LLC SHALL PAY THE TOWN \$4,250.00 PER MONTH (\$51,000.00 ANNUALLY) FOR THE RIGHT TO OPERATE THE TOWN’S FACILITY. ADDITIONALLY, PRIOR TO THE 12/31/2028 EXPIRATION DATE, WE CARE DENALI LLC SHALL ALSO REPLACE THE CURRENT TRUCK WEIGH SCALE AT THE LEAF AND YARD WASTE FACILITY AT NO COST TO THE TOWN.”

This item was on the consent calendar and amended to correct the ending date of 12/31/2027.

ITEM NO. 6 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: “RESOLVED, THAT THE BOND RESOLUTION ENTITLED, ‘A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$6,250,000 FOR THE COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INSPECTION AND CONSTRUCTION PHASE OF THE EAST TRUNK WETLANDS CROSSING PROJECT, AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO REIMBURSE \$750,000 OF SUCH APPROPRIATION AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5,500,000 TO FUND THE BALANCE OF SUCH APPROPRIATION.,’ BE, AND HEREBY IS, APPROVED.”

Pamela Iacono moved to waive the reading of all items and to combine items 6 & 7, duly seconded and carried unanimously.

Hannah Gale, District 6 asked if the sewer project was contingent upon the development project taking place. Town Engineer Bill Hurley explained that the sewer work needs to be done regardless of the development there.

VOTE: Items 6 & 7 were approved by unanimous voice vote.

ITEM NO. 7 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: “WHEREAS, THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD (THE “TOWN”) HAS ADOPTED AT THE REQUEST OF THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY (“WPCA”) A RESOLUTION ENTITLED, ‘A RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$6,250,000 FOR COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INSPECTION AND CONSTRUCTION PHASE OF THE EAST TRUNK WETLANDS CROSSING PROJECT, AUTHORIZING A GRANT TO REIMBURSE \$750,000 OF SUCH APPROPRIATION AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5,500,000 TO FUND THE BALANCE OF SUCH APPROPRIATION,’ (THE “RESOLUTION”); AND WHEREAS, THE RESOLUTION APPROPRIATES \$6,250,000 (THE “APPROPRIATION”) FOR COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INSPECTION AND CONSTRUCTION PHASES OF THE EAST TRUNK WETLANDS CROSSING PROJECT (THE

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“PROJECT”); AND WHEREAS, THE APPROPRIATION SHALL BE FUNDED BY SEVERAL SOURCES INCLUDING: 1) \$750,000 IN GRANT FUNDS FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT’S URBAN ACT GRANT PROGRAM (THE “GRANT”); AND 2) \$5,500,000 IN BONDS ISSUED BY THE TOWN (THE “BONDS”); AND WHEREAS, THE RESOLUTION AUTHORIZES THE APPROPRIATION, THE NEGOTIATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF THE TERMS OF THE GRANT AND AUTHORIZES THE BONDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$5,500,000; AND WHEREAS, WHILE THE TOWN IS LIABLE FOR THE DEBT SERVICE ON THE BONDS, FOR INTERNAL ACCOUNTING PURPOSES, IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT ALL COSTS OF THE PROJECT INCLUDING DEBT SERVICE ON THE BONDS BE ALLOCATED TO, AND REIMBURSED TO THE TOWN BY THE WPCA; AND WHEREAS, THE WPCA HAS AGREED TO PAY FOR THE COSTS OF THE PROJECT AND THE DEBT SERVICE ON THE BONDS AUTHORIZED BY THE RESOLUTION; AND NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY: RESOLVED, 1) THAT THE DEBT SERVICE ON THE BONDS AS SUCH DEBT SERVICE BECOMES DUE SHALL BE PAID BY THE WPCA FROM ITS OWN FUNDS AND THE OBLIGATION OF THE WPCA SHALL BE SET FORTH IN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (THE “MOU”) WITH THE TOWN SATISFACTORY TO THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN; AND 2) THAT THE FIRST SELECTWOMAN IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO EXECUTE THE MOU ON BEHALF OF THE TOWN.

This item was combined with item 6.

ITEM NO. 8 ON CALL: TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN: “RESOLVED, THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH A REQUEST FROM THE TOWN ATTORNEY, CERTAIN AMENDMENTS BE, AND HEREBY ARE, MADE TO THE FOLLOWING CELL TOWER LEASE: DISH WIRELESS, LLC - 100 REEF ROAD.

Joe Seibert, District 5 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

Hannah Gale expressed her concern about the area where this tower is located and the amount of equipment contained thereon.

Joe Seibert explained it is a multiple host provider and 5G operates at a very high spectrum level swath. The propagation of that swath requires more towers to be built. The FCC, FDA & American Cancer Society have determined that this is not dangerous for people on the ground as the energy decreases rapidly on the horizon.

VOTE: The cell tower lease with DISH Wireless was approved with 36 in favor and 1 opposed (Gale).

ITEM NO. 9 ON CALL: TO HEAR AND CONSIDER FOR THE FIRST TIME AMENDMENTS TO THE NOISE ORDINANCE, CHAPTER 78 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD, SPONSORED BY JEFF GALDENZI, DISTRICT 3; JAY WOLK, DISTRICT 5; ANDREW GRACEFFA, DISTRICT 6; JILL VERGARA, DISTRICT 7; AND DRU GEORGIADIS DISTRICT 9.

The Moderator announced that the sponsors have requested that he refer the noise ordinance amendments back to the Legislation and Administration Committee.

ITEM NO. 10 ON CALL: TO FORM THE RTM SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ENERGY INITIATIVES.

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Andy Graceffa, District 6 moved the item, duly seconded.

Ken Astarita, District 10 suggested assigning this to the Sustainability Task Force and draw on their expertise rather than limiting it to the RTM.

Motion: Pamela Iacono moved to strike and substitute the following: To ask the Sustainable Task Force to explore and include updated energy initiatives in their long-term sustainability plan and communicate those to the public through community outreach, duly seconded.

Josh Garskof, District 5 said the Sustainability Task Force's mission is more ecological consciousness than energy cost savings.

Ms. Iacono said the Task Force's charge has an entire chapter on energy including rebates, incentives, tax credits, and opportunities for residents and businesses with low-interest financing as well as Energize CT seeking out rebates for business and non-profits leveraging federal and state financing.

Sharon Pistilli, District 3 said the rebates are for residents who install green equipment such as solar and does not address aggregate energy.

John Kuhn, District 7 explained the big difference is to use this leverage against the regulators and utilities on behalf of the Town and send a message to the utilities; community energy aggregation.

VOTE: The amendment to assign the exploration of updated energy initiatives to the Sustainable Task Force failed with 12 in favor and 25 opposed.

IN FAVOR: McCormack, Durrell, Gale, Choniski, Ference, Iacono, Meyers, Scinto, Astarita, Britton, Sparacino, Tallman

OPPOSED: Furey, Longo, Ruggiero, Gerber, Perham, Galdenzi, Lambert, Pistilli, Karson, Spolyar, Zezima, Barahona, Garskof, Siebert, Wolk, Berecz, Graceffa, Havey, Kuhn, McDermott, Vergara, Wackerman, Brown, Georgiadis, Horton

Motion: Pamela Iacono moved to add the following to the resolution: consisting of 5 members and report their findings at the October RTM meeting, duly seconded.

Ms. Iacono said in the L&A Committee the size of the membership was discussed in compliance with the Rules to Regulate.

VOTE: The amendment regarding composition and deadline for the committee report was approved with 33 in favor and 4 opposed (Gerber, Berecz, Kuhn, Georgiadis).

VOTE: The resolution to form an RTM Special Committee on Energy Initiatives consisting of 5 members and reporting their findings at the October RTM meeting was approved with 27 in favor and 7 opposed (Ruggiero, McCormack, Gale, Choniski, Ference, Iacono, Meyers) (Reps Furey, Longo and Tallman were not present to vote).

Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Elizabeth P. Browne, MMC, MCTC

Town Clerk